



**Essay Contest Rules and Prompt  
24<sup>th</sup> Annual Essay and Slogan Contest  
Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes**

1. The Essay Contest is open to all Kentucky high school students in grades 9-12.
2. Essay entry is limited to one per student. Previous contest entries will not be accepted.
3. Essay entry is limited to 600 words. All entries must be typed and double-spaced.
4. Student and school names shall not appear anywhere in the body of the essay.
5. Essays will be judged on research and understanding of voting and the First Amendment, idea development, organization, language, and correctness (see attached rubric).
6. Students must submit their essays with the enclosed entry form. All sections of the entry form must be completed.
7. Essays may be submitted either online at [www.sos.ky.gov/contests](http://www.sos.ky.gov/contests) or by mail to the address below. Essays submitted online must be in Microsoft Word format.
8. All entries must be submitted electronically by 5 p.m. (EST) December 1, 2012, or postmarked by that date, to be eligible for consideration.
9. Entries become the property of the Kentucky Secretary of State's Office and will not be returned.
10. All guidelines must be met for any entry to be considered by contest judges.

**Essay Prompt:**

**One of the most important responsibilities of citizens of the United States is to participate in their own government by voting for candidates who will represent their views in public office. But in the 2008 presidential election, only about 57 percent of those Kentuckians who were eligible fulfilled that responsibility.**

**Some countries have laws that make voting mandatory, while exempting certain adults based on factors such as age, illness, or religious belief. In such countries, eligible individuals who do not vote may be subject to penalties, such as fines or community service.**

**Your essay should discuss the following two questions:**

- 1. Considering the pros and cons of compulsory voting, does such a law improve democracy?**
- 2. How would a mandatory voting law be affected by the First Amendment's guarantee of the freedom of speech?**

Mail entries to: ATTN: Slogan and Essay Contest  
Office of the Secretary of State  
Suite 152, State Capitol  
700 Capital Avenue  
Frankfort, KY 40601

You may also submit entries online at [www.sos.ky.gov/contests](http://www.sos.ky.gov/contests).

Note: Family members of employees of the Office of the Secretary of State or the State Board of Elections are not eligible to enter the Essay Contest.